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DEMOCRACY AND GLOBAL ISSUES

IA52 Gleick, James. **How Google Dominates Us.** (New York Review of Books, August 18, 2011) Currently available online at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/aug/18/how-google-dominates-us/?pagination=false>

Is Google evil? That question is essentially at the root of this review of four new books about the Internet phenomenon, whose motto is, famously, "Don't be evil." Steven Levy's IN THE PLEX and Douglas Edwards' I'M FEELING LUCKY, are accounts by former insiders, while THE GOOGLIZATION OF EVERYTHING (AND WHY WE SHOULD WORRY) by Siva Vaidhyanathan and SEARCH & DESTROY: WHY YOU CAN'T TRUST GOOGLE by Scott Cleland are outsider critiques that warn, among other things, about the Google's marketing of users as products to advertisers, who employ search data to specifically target potential customers. The reviewer surveys Google's development from the early days, its trajectory to Internet and ad dominance, examining its failures (Google Buzz) and the ethical razor's edge it has walked on various issues, including monopolistic behavior, infringements of privacy and cooperation with oppressive governments such as China. Social media have changed the Web, and Google strives to meet the latest evolution with Google+. Gleick writes, "We need to decide what we want from Google -- if only we can make up our collective minds" which are the source of Google's success. Even if we do, we might not get what we want -- but at least we'll get better search results and tailor-made ads.

IA53 Borrás, Jun; Scoones, Ian; Hughes, David. **Small-scale farmers increasingly at risk from 'global land grabbing'.** (Guardian / Poverty Matters Blog, posted April 15, 2011) Currently available online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/poverty-matters/2011/apr/15/risks-over-increasing-global-land-deals>

The authors warn that the global rush for agricultural land, particularly in Africa and Asia, is putting local small-scale farmers at risk, as these deals rarely take into account local tenure rights. They note that the farmland deals are being driven by food price volatility, production of biofuels, the financial crisis and growing interest in carbon trading. Proponents of these deals say that they provide economies of scale and produce food at prices low enough for poor consumers, but the authors refute this, noting that much of the land secured in these deals is used for export agriculture and production of commodities, not food. The stakes are high for the poor in much of the world, particularly women and children, who depend upon small-scale family agriculture; the privatization of land and dispossession and eviction of small farmers is rarely taken into account in high-level governmental or corporate board meetings. The authors write that it is essential that policies be adopted that curb the power of investors and secure land rights for local farmers before these land deals are negotiated.

IA54 Ball, Karen. **The U.S. Soybean King: Can Celebrity Farmer Kip Cullers End World Hunger?** (Time, July 21, 2011) Currently available online at <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2084388,00.html>

Kip Cullers barely made it through high school — his words — and never took biology or chemistry. But he's arguably the globe's leading authority on soybean genetics and the precise brew of fertilizer, fungicide, weed killer, water — and yes, a pinch of sugar — required to grow a knockout crop. That makes Cullers a bona fide celebrity soybean farmer, who already holds multiple world records for soybean production. Last fall, he set a new bar by producing 160.6 bushels per acre on his Missouri farm — nearly four times the national average. Perhaps even more telling is that Cullers yields 100 bushels per acre on the 300 commercial acres that he doesn't baby and brood over as he does with his experimental plots. What sets the soybean king apart from other farmers is his willingness to try something new every year. For example, he is experimenting with a buried drip tape to provide water to his plants, a method that may produce better crops while conserving water. Cullers adds sugar to the water three times a season, to promote microbe activity, which "chews at organic matter down in the soil" and helps increase carbon dioxide levels, he says. But Cullers recognizes that the man who would like to solve world hunger is also, at day's end, a farmer trying to make a living, and doesn't want to reveal all his secrets.

IA55 Friedman, Lisa. **Which Nations Are Most At Risk From Climate Change?** (Scientific American online, posted February 24, 2011) Currently available online at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=which-nations-most-risk-climate-change>

Global institutions charged with protecting the most vulnerable nations from the effects of climate change are facing a major dilemma of prioritization. Because there is no international consensus for ranking the possibilities and the funds to help cope with climate change are limited, notes the author, countries are already sparring over who will be considered the most vulnerable. The decision-making process will be fraught with conflict, writes Friedman, pointing out that many scientists consider China, susceptible to desertification, typhoons and sea level rise to be the world's most threatened nation, yet with a USD 5 trillion economy, it may be more able to cope with extreme events than poverty-stricken Bangladesh or low-lying Seychelles. Two recent studies have attempted to quantify the vulnerabilities of 233 nations, in order to be allocate scarce climate-change funding. However, the author notes, the multibillion-dollar Green Climate Fund established in Cancun, but the funding pledge is still unfulfilled; she warns that the world doesn't have much time to make choices.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

IA56 Tafirenyika, Masimba. **Information Technology Super-Charging Rwanda's Economy.** (Africa Renewal, April 2011, pp. 18-20) Currently available online at <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol25no1/rwanda-information-technology.html>

Tiny landlocked Rwanda, one of the world's poorest countries, was nearly brought to its knees by a genocide in 1994 that killed about 800,000 people. Today it aspires to be a regional high-tech hub, with such innovations as the smart-card ticketing system (twende) introduced in the capital, Kigali,

in early 2011 by Kigali Bus Services, that has caused rapid changes in the economy and has transformed the country into an important center for business communications and information technology. In turn, these innovations are altering the way Rwandans communicate, pay for goods and services, and go about their daily lives.

IA57 Taylor, Alan M. Financial Rebalancing Act: Stop Worrying About Global Flow Of Capital (Foreign Affairs, July/August 2011)

According to Alan Taylor, a senior adviser at Morgan Stanley, the capital flow imbalance between developed and emerging economies is already adjusting. After the financial crises of the 1990s, emerging economies adopted policies for saving enormous official reserves as a way to cushion the next crisis. The odd result was that capital flowed from developing countries to wealthier developed countries, a historic reversal. The lower interest rates from the "savings glut" encouraged excessive financial risk taking in the developed countries, contributing to the 2007-2008 crisis and subsequent Great Recession. Having protected their economies through the crisis, the emerging economies are now building reserves more slowly as they spend more money on internal investment, consumption, and social safety nets. Developed countries, meanwhile, are also saving less while spending more on aging populations. As the global savings glut subsides, global interest rates are rising, and the flow of capital is moving more in the direction of the rapidly expanding emerging economies.

IA58 Galbraith, Kate; Price, Asher. A Mighty Wind. (*Texas Monthly*, August 2011, pp. 104-107, 156-163)

Galbraith and Price discuss the history of the wind power industry in Texas. Despite its reputation as an oil producer, an unlikely alliance in Texas has created the country's largest wind energy industry, greatly surpassing California's wind farms' output. The Texas legislature and federal energy incentives provided the push towards wind energy. The authors note that many of the turbines are made in Europe and China, and that it is likely that the Texas wind power industry has reached its potential. They note that many people now complain about the noise from the turbines and the high-tension power lines on their properties.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

IA59 Bumgarner, John. Tech-Savvy Terrorists. (Asia-Pacific Defense Forum, vol. 36, no. 2, April 2011, pp. 10-17) Currently available online at http://apdforum.com/en_GB/article/rmiap/articles/print/features/2011/04/01/feature-01

The author is chief technology officer, U.S. Cyber Consequences Unit (US-CCU), an independent, non-profit research institute that provides assessments of the strategic and economic consequences of possible cyber-attacks and cyber-assisted physical attacks. In his position, he describes methods in which countering extremism on the internet requires innovation. As terrorism, illicit activities and provocations by rogue states such as North Korea threaten to disturb the peace that America's allies and partners work so hard to secure, both the authorities and the terrorist networks have had to deal with an important component that previous terrorist incidents lacked: the use of 21st-century technology. This development allows the attackers and the extremist groups to plan the assault and the government agencies, in return, to fight them.

IA60 Traub, James. **The All-American.** (New York Times Magazine, July 17, 2011) Currently available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/17/magazine/john-kerry-our-man-in-kabul.html?pagewanted=all>

The author notes that after Barack Obama won the U.S. presidency in 2008, John Kerry, then the junior senator from Massachusetts, very much wanted to be named secretary of state, a job for which he felt qualified as a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. However, Obama picked New York senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton instead. In 2009, Kerry has been able to practice his own brand of diplomacy as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; he has become a kind of ex-officio member of Obama's national security team, which has dispatched him to conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. Kerry's willingness to travel anywhere he is needed, and stay as long as necessary, has won him Obama's gratitude.

U.S. SOCIETY & VALUES

IA61 McCullough, David. **Samuel Morse's Reversal Of Fortune.**(Smithsonian, vol. 42, no. 5, September 2011, pp. 80-88) Available online at <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/Samuel-Morses-Reversal-of-Fortune.html?c=y&page=3>

Samuel F.B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, had set his hopes on being a painter since his college days. However, a series of setbacks and disappointments, the death of his wife, an ill-advised candidacy for the mayor of New York City under the anti-immigrant Nativist party, had by 1838 left him despondent, and he quit painting for good. The author notes, however, that if Morse had not stopped painting when he did, his home tinkering would not have resulted in the invention of the electromagnetic telegraph. After quitting his art, Morse focused on the crude device in his New York apartment. By opening and closing an electrical circuit, signals of dots and dashes could be translated into letters by a receiving apparatus. Key to his invention was a series of electromagnetic relays that would place no limit on the distance a message could be transmitted. After a series of successful tests, Morse "electrified" Washington with a demonstration of the telegraph in the Capitol, in the presence of President van Buren.

IA62 Gottlieb, Lori. **How To Land Your Kid In Therapy.** (Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2011) Currently available online at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/07/how-to-land-your-kid-in-therapy/8555/>

Is it possible for parents to do too much for their children? Yes, says therapist and mother Lori Gottlieb. It is possible that parents, by trying to protect their children from unhappiness, deprive them of happiness as adults. Overprotected children grow into adults who think something must be terribly wrong when they experience the normal frustrations of life. Kids need exposure to discomfort, failure, and struggle to learn how to be resilient and persevere -- qualities that lead to life fulfillment and success. And despite the spate of articles in recent years exploring why so many people in their 20s seem reluctant to grow up, the problem may be less that kids are refusing to separate and individuate than that their parents are resisting doing so. With families having fewer children and society offering less of a close-knit community, it may be that parents cling too closely to their children for companionship.